

CVM eNews - September 2019

Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine <cornellvet@cornell.edu>

Tue 9/17/2019 3:30 PM

To: Susanne K. Whitaker <skw2@cornell.edu>



Cornell University  
College of Veterinary Medicine

 eNews

## September 2019



*Scenes from this summer's BBS Symposium. Photo credit: Rachel Philipson*

### Message from the Dean

The semester is in full swing and soon we will welcome hundreds of veterinarians and researchers for a variety of academic and educational events.

On Thursday, Sept. 26, the college will host the [Third Annual Antimicrobial Resistance Symposium: Research Synergies in Human and Animal Medicine](#). Happening in LH 5, the

symposium brings together researchers and clinicians from across Cornell with a shared interest in combating antimicrobial resistance to discuss current research and alternative therapies.

The college is honored to co-host with the New York State Veterinary Society the [New York State Veterinary Conference on Oct. 4, 5 and 6](#). With over 148 sessions to pick from, including labs and interactive sessions, this event is a good opportunity to refresh or broaden your knowledge. Attending the conference is complimentary for CVM community members, [but you must register](#). There is a fee for those wanting to attend lab seminars or receive CE credits.

Cancer research at Cornell spans a broad range of research excellence on both the Ithaca and New York City campuses. On Friday, Oct. 11, the [Second Annual Intercampus Cancer Symposium](#) will be held at the college in LH 4. The symposium will feature two world-leading experts in cancer immunotherapy and biotechnology, faculty talks and a workshop on funding opportunities.

Also mark your calendars for this year's CVM Fall Festival on Tuesday, Oct. 15, from 2-4 p.m. in Takoda's Run Atrium. The Planning Committee and Staff Council are organizing an afternoon of games, refreshments and prizes. This will be a great time for you to catch up with colleagues and meet new friends.

I look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events and much more happening in the college this fall.

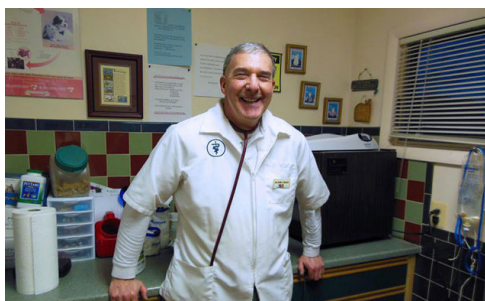
Warm regards,

Lorin D. Warnick, D.V.M., Ph.D. '94  
The Austin O. Hoey Dean of Veterinary Medicine

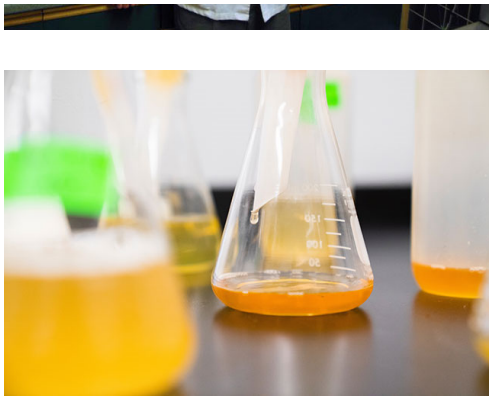
## Latest News



[College honors employees for outstanding service and quality](#)



[Mark Helfat, D.V.M. '77, receives Pennsylvania's Distinguished Veterinary Service Award](#)



## [Graduate student wins award from Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#)

### September Trivia

**Click the button to participate in this month's trivia question!**

August's trivia question: The first building at Cornell dedicated entirely to veterinary medicine opened its doors in 1896. What was the scholastic requirement for students entering the veterinary program at that time?

Answer: Must have a high school diploma. Over 58% of you got it correct! The next-most popular (but incorrect!) answer was "no scholastic requirement."

### Community Notes

[Hellos, goodbyes and HR update](#)

[Staff Council Spotlight on the Accounting Service Center!](#)



## Save the Date

- [Creativity Spark Workshop](#) on Saturday, Sept. 21 at 8 a.m. in Uris Auditorium
- [The DeeDee Arrison Concert for the Animals](#) on Saturday, Oct. 5 at 4 p.m.
- CVM Fall Festival on Tuesday, Oct. 15 from 2-4 p.m. in Takoda's Run Atrium
- State of the College on Tuesday, Nov. 5 at noon in LH 4/5

## Awards and Honors

Join us in congratulating the following CVM community members on their various awards and accomplishments:

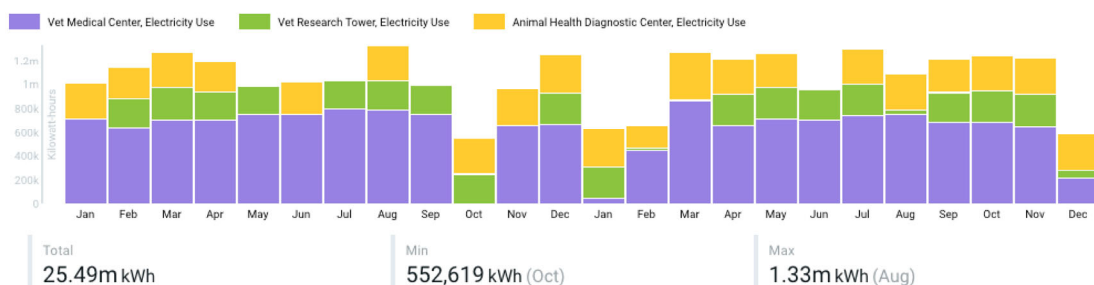
- Jennifer Fan, D.V.M. '21: Tied for first place in the [2019 Smithcors Student Veterinary History Essay Contest](#) with her essay "Animals in Court: The Early Days of Veterinary Forensics."

## Welcome

This semester we welcome many new students, including 120 in the D.V.M. Class of 2023, 55 percent of whom hail from New York; 18 in the Biomedical and Biological Sciences Ph.D. program; 41 students in the Master of Public Health program, which recently graduated its first cohort this May; and five in the Master of Professional Studies program, who also graduated two students in the last year. Welcome one and all!

## ⇩ CVM Energy Dashboard ⇩

Total Electricity Use by Building / Jan 1, 2017-Dec 31, 2018





Want to explore CVM sustainability? Visit our [Energy Dashboard](#) to view our buildings' energy usage and send any sustainability project ideas to the Green Team at [tlt47@cornell.edu](mailto:tlt47@cornell.edu).

## CVM in the News



### [How Stuff Works: A calico cat wears a coat of many colors](#)

Bruce Kornreich, D.V.M. '92, Ph.D. '05, describes how genetics can influence calico cat colors and behavior.



### [Cars.com: Do you drive with your pet unrestrained? Here are three reasons to reconsider that](#)

Dr. Elisa Mazzaferro of Cornell University Veterinary Specialists explains why letting a pet loose in a car is dangerous.

[More News](#)

[More Events](#)

## Have something to share?

Let us know what you want to see in the Community Notes portion of eNews. Contribute events and articles which might be of interest to your colleagues and the CVM community at large. Win an award? Publish a paper? Let us know.

Send in your submission by 10/11/19 to [mc2647@cornell.edu](mailto:mc2647@cornell.edu). Make sure to put eNews in the subject line so that your item can be considered for the next issue.



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## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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### College honors employees for outstanding service and quality

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 - 10:43am



The ceremony included the announcement of this year's recipients of the Dionne Henderson Staff Excellence Award. All photos by Rachel Philipson.

For their years of service and excellent work, 37 staff members earned awards in a celebration of their accomplishments at the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) Aug. 7.

“It’s gratifying to see people here from throughout the college who are involved in everything from clinical patient care, diagnostic services, biomedical research, public health, international programs — all impacting lives in central New York, throughout the state, the nation and the world,” said Lorin D. Warnick, D.V.M., Ph.D. ’94, the Austin O. Hooey Dean of Veterinary Medicine. “This is a dynamic and invigorating place to work, and that’s thanks to all that you do.”

The ceremony included the announcement of this year’s recipients of the Dionne Henderson Staff Excellence Award. Now in its second year, the award’s namesake, Dionne Henderson, worked at the college for nearly a decade in administrative positions for both Human Resources and the Department of Clinical Sciences. She



passed away unexpectedly in 2016 after complications from a cancer-related surgery. Her family attended the event.

“The best part is that this is a community celebration, and we have come together like I have never seen before to create a wonderful event to recognize our hardworking, dedicated staff,” said Mary Beth Jordan, CVM’s director of human resources.



The Dionne Henderson Staff Excellence Award winners with Henderson's family.

The award was presented to three recipients: Marie de Roos, Gwen Frost and Nicole Woodhull. Marie de Roos is an administrative assistant in the Accounting Service Center (ASC). “Marie is the backbone of our Accounting Service Center,” said Candy Hawker, accounts representative at the ASC, which nominated de Roos. “Her positive nature and warm personality are always a welcome addition to any committee and gathering.”

Gwen Frost is a senior grants and contracts coordinator for the Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC). “Gwen’s dedication to each and every faculty member, her excellence in providing high-quality proposal packages and her ability to communicate across our college, the university and sometimes the world to bring a project together is beyond distinction,” said Kim Potter, director of business operations at the AHDC, Frost’s supervisor and one of her nominators.



Clockwise from top left, the winners of the Dionne Henderson Staff Excellence Award: Nicole Woodhull, Gwen Frost and Marie de Roos.

Nicole Woodhull is an executive staff assistant in the Office of the Dean. “Nicole is the most compassionate, diplomatic and welcoming supervisor we have had the honor to work with,” said Christina Wilkinson, administrative assistant in CVM’s student and academic services office and one of Woodhull’s nominators. “She gives everything she does 110 percent and is not afraid to step outside her comfort zone.”

The event also celebrated the Staff Service Awards, which recognize outstanding staff whose work contributes to the success of Cornell’s students, faculty, alumni and colleagues at the university. Combined, their years of service totaled an impressive 985 years.

“For those of you who are celebrating service milestones, we know it’s not just about the years you’ve been here,” said Mary George Opperman, M.S. ’17, Cornell’s Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer. “It’s about all the dedication you’ve put in to those years, all the hard work and everything that you’ve accomplished.”

## 20 Years of Service

- Rosemary Adessa
- Gordon Andrews
- Keila Dhondt
- Kathy Fowler
- Belinda Gross
- Kimberly Hayes
- Jen Powers
- Jai Sweet, Ph.D. '96
- Jessica Divell
- Cathy French
- Ariana Harris '05
- Paul Jennette '87
- Sherri Stull
- Victoria Thomas



Recipients of the Staff Service Awards, which recognize outstanding staff whose work contributes to the success of Cornell's students, faculty, alumni and colleagues at the university.

## 25 Years of Service

- Catherine Brown
- Scott Butler
- Curtis Kretz '94
- Laurie Lychalk
- Joseph McLain
- Casey Morgan
- Michelle Stefanski- Seymour
- Dean Wolf



"The best part is that this is a community celebration, and we have come together like I have never seen before to create a wonderful event to recognize our hardworking, dedicated staff," said Mary Beth Jordan, CVM's director of human resources.

## 30 Years of Service

- Joby Cowulich
- Wendy English
- Brenda Henley
- Diane Kilts, M.H.A. '96
- Kim Salino
- Deborah Watrous
- Judy Withers

## 35 Years of Service

- Barbara Catlin
- Gwen Frost
- Patricia Janhonen
- Vonda Royce





- Karen Wilcox

## 40 Years of Service

- Linda Benson
- Pamela Schenck
- Amy Yeager '76, D.V.M. '79

“This represents an amazing achievement,” said Warnick.

By Melanie Greaver Cordova



Combined, their years of service total an impressive 985 years.



## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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# Mark Helfat, D.V.M. '77, receives Pennsylvania's Distinguished Veterinary Service Award

🐾 Tuesday, August 27, 2019 - 3:13pm

Mark Helfat, D.V.M. '77, received the 2019 [Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association](#) and [Animal Care PA](#) Distinguished Veterinary Service Award during the organizations' Hall of Fame Awards Dinner on Aug. 15, 2019.

The Distinguished Veterinary Service Award is presented annually to a member of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association for an outstanding act or achievement to the veterinary profession over a period of years.

*Excerpt from [PVMA's press release](#):*

*1977 graduate of Cornell University, he has probably seen and done it all in veterinary medicine to this point, from bull blood draws to dairy herd work to his love of beagles to advocacy. It is this latter where he has had his passion over the past years, working up from NJVMA Delegate to the AVMA to our District 2 representative for 6 years and eventually all the way up to the "Chair of the Board of Directors" of the AVMA. Through it all he has fought for the profession and making it better, especially in the area of student debt and financial hardships through his advocacy efforts.*

*He has also served as a very important mentor for many new grads in the realm of veterinary medicine and in the often-turbulent waters of advocacy and organized veterinary medicine. We all know the profession on so many levels will be left better off by his efforts.*

[A press release from PVMA along with a complete list of the winners is available online.](#)





## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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# Graduate student Irma Fernandez wins award from Howard Hughes Medical Institute

🐾 Tuesday, September 3, 2019 - 11:24am

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Irma Fernandez knows the value of good mentorship. After all, the support of trusted instructors guided her from a poor childhood in Los Angeles, California – where she was raised by a single mother from Mexico – to the science labs of Cornell. Recently, the rising fourth-year Ph.D. student in biochemistry, molecular and cell biology received a further boost to her academic career and her own plans to pay it forward: Fernandez is one of this year’s recipients of the Gilliam Fellowship for Advanced Study, awarded annually by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) to racially, ethnically or other underrepresented doctoral students in biomedical or life sciences disciplines and their advisors.

Fernandez’s research on the mitochondrial protein Sirtuin 5 and its role in breast cancer and potential novel therapies spans two labs: those of Dr. Robert Weiss, professor of molecular genetics in the department of biomedical sciences at Cornell’s College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), and Dr. Hening Lin, professor in the department of chemistry and chemical biology. “I’m fortunate to have two extremely dedicated and experienced mentors with complementary expertise, which makes my project highly collaborative and gives me access to learning and doing experiments across various fields,” she said.

“I also feel very happy and fortunate to have been awarded this fellowship,” said Fernandez, who received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, San Diego, and is the first in her family to attend college. “It will open up a lot of opportunities for me.” For one, she will have the funds to attend her first national conferences, including the HHMI science meetings and Gilliam fellow meetings, where she hopes to expand her connections to role models and the Gilliam community.

More importantly, the award provides \$4000 per year to Fernandez, Weiss and Lin to carry out ideas for improving diversity and inclusion at Cornell that they proposed in the Gilliam application. They hope to create a program for current underrepresented minority graduate students to return to their alma maters, accompanied by their advisors, to speak to undergraduates about their experiences in graduate school and invite them to apply for summer or Ph.D. programs in Ithaca. In addition, Weiss and Lin will receive mentorship training from HHMI and plan to pass on their new perspectives locally by running two workshops for faculty members on successful mentoring and improving communication with advisees.

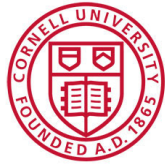
“This is the most meaningful part of the fellowship to me,” said Fernandez, who is already actively promoting diversity as co-president of Cornell’s chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science and a co-founder of the Molecular Biology and Genetics Diversity Council. “As an underrepresented scientist, I hope to serve as a role model and mentor for others with similar backgrounds, as was done for me.”

Weiss, who also serves as associate dean for research and graduate education at CVM, certainly believes his advisee is the right person for the job. “I was delighted by the news of this well-known and highly prestigious fellowship and extremely proud of Irma. She is well organized, hardworking and extremely committed to being successful as a graduate student and scientist. She has a long career ahead of her, and the Gilliam will not only help propel her through the next stages in her training but also provide resources for her to continue and extend her work as an advocate for diversity in science.”

By Olivia Hall



## September 2019 Trivia



Cornell University  
College of Veterinary Medicine

Thanks for participating in this month's trivia quiz.

\* 1. In 2015-2016, how many lightbulbs did CVM Facilities change from fluorescent to LED?

- 10,564
- 9,876
- 12,360

Submit

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See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).



# Cornell University

## College of Veterinary Medicine

CVM >

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## September 2019: Hellos, goodbyes and HR update

Help us welcome new employees who joined the CVM community in August and bid a fond farewell to those who have retired.

### New Hires

- **Parminder Basran**, Associate Research Professor, Department of Clinical Sciences
- **Gil Ben-Shlomo**, Associate Professor, Department of Clinical Sciences
- **Tanya Clark**, Program/Extension Aide II, Animal Health Diagnostic Center
- **Elizabeth Lorraine Fox**, Lecturer, Master of Public Health Program
- **Lorraine Ayana Francis**, Lecturer, Master of Public Health Program
- **Emily Lampson**, Program/Extension Aide II, Animal Health Diagnostic Center
- **Yihong Li**, Senior Lecturer, Master of Public Health Program
- **Isabelle Louge**, International Programs Coordinator, International Programs
- **Reilley Mastroe**, Animal Technician/Handler, Department of Clinical Sciences
- **Matthew Thomas**, Laboratory Technician, Department of Clinical Sciences
- **Nina Thompson**, Curriculum Veterinary Technician, Department of Clinical Sciences
- **Sophie Trowbridge**, Technician II, Department of Biomedical Sciences
- **Bob Wakeman**, HR Generalist III, Human Resources
- **Julie Webb**, Instructor, Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences

### Retirements

- **William Miller**, Professor, Department of Clinical Sciences

### Human Resources Update

Visit the [Human Resources webpage](#) for the latest news and announcements about working at Cornell.

To learn about open positions, [please visit Workday](#). If you have a question, reach out to the CVM Office of Human Resources at (607) 253-4111.

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## Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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### Staff Council spotlight on the Accounting Service Center

The CVM Staff Council is pleased to highlight the Accounting Service Center (ASC) in the September 2019 edition of CVM eNews. The ASC is located in the heart of the College, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Schurman Hall.



The Accounting Service Center team. Photo by Rebecca Harman.

Recently, the ASC staff took a few minutes out of their busy schedules to talk to the CVM Staff Council about the work that they do to support the College.

**Staff Council:** Broadly, please tell us what the ASC does?

**ASC:** We facilitate the financial workings of the entire college. This includes processing all expenditures for the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA), Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC), Facilities, academic programs, research laboratories and administrative units. We also process all receipts for the College, with the exception of receipts for CUHA and the AHDC.

**Staff Council:** You must handle a tremendous number of transactions each month! Can you provide us with some statistics?

**ASC:** For the most recent fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, we processed over 51,000 transactions. About half of those were for purchases made with pcards, both in the departments and in the ASC.

**Staff Council:** Tell us about the structure of the ASC and the demographics of the people who work in the group.

**ASC:** The ASC is comprised of two teams, one of which primarily serves academic groups, the other which supports the service units and administration. The 18 employees who make up the teams come from a variety of backgrounds such as banking, human resources,

budget and payroll, making up a diverse group with a wide range of skills. As a group we also have a long history of working at Cornell, with a total of about 350 years of service behind us.

**Staff Council:** It appears that you work very closely together. What do you most appreciate about being part of the ASC group?

**ASC:** We work in very close quarters physically and depend on each other to get our jobs done. We function well together because we respect each other's space and are considerate of each other's needs. We also make a point to enjoy some non-work activities together, such as contributing to the Elf Program, celebrating birthdays and chipping in for lottery tickets when the stakes are high!

**Staff Council:** What aspects of your work in the ASC do you value the most highly?

**ASC:** Almost everyone at the College, from staff to students to faculty, walks through our doors at one time or another. We appreciate meeting others in the community and helping them get their jobs done. We also enjoy opportunities for personal development. We are constantly being trained to understand updates to the financial systems we use, and we have access to classes through the School of Continuing Education. Another benefit is the flexibility to serve in campus organizations. Members of the ASC have historically been involved in the CVM Staff Council, the Employee Assembly and the University Assembly.

**Staff Council:** What is one thing you'd like to tell the CVM community about the ASC?

**ASC:** We view ourselves as a customer service group operating within the bounds of Cornell University. As we mentioned, we enjoy problem solving and find it gratifying to help everyone at the College who depends on us to maintain smooth day-to-day operations. No problem is too big or complicated for the ASC to tackle!

**Staff Council:** Thank you, ASC, for being our CVM Staff Council's September Spotlight. We enjoyed speaking with you and learning about your group.

Next month, the Spotlight will be on the Waste Management Facility group. Have ideas or suggestions for an upcoming *Spotlight*? Email us at [cvmstaffcouncil@cornell.edu](mailto:cvmstaffcouncil@cornell.edu)

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# American Veterinary Medical History Society

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## 2019 Student Essay Contest Winners

June 2, 2019 | Jessica Zeiger, DVM



Essay Contest Chair Dr. Jessica Zeiger is pleased to announce winners of the 2019 Smithcors Student Veterinary History Essay Contest.

1st Prize [tie] Jennifer Fan '21 Cornell University  
Animals in Court: The Early Days of Veterinary Forensics.

1st Prize [tie] Scarlett Denise Welfel '22 Iowa State University  
Doctor of Donkeys: The Story of Claude Bourgelat Who Turned His Love of Equids into a Medical Profession.

3rd Prize Annelise Radzin '23 Ohio State University  
Trypanosoma brucei brucei: The Parasite that Plagued a Continent.

4th Prize Brooke Fourthman '19 Purdue University  
A Brief History of Interventional Cardiology.





HowStuffWorks / Animals / Pets / Cats / Family Cats

# A Calico Cat Wears a Coat of Many Colors

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN AUG 26, 2019

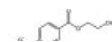


**Calico cats, like this tiny kitten, are almost always female. And "calico" actually refers to the markings on their fur, not their breed.** ALEXTURTON/GETTY IMAGES

You might think of only those animals living in the wild as having distinctive coats or markings. Zebras, giraffes and tigers come to mind. But the domesticated calico cat not only wears a unique coat, this fascinating feline also has other intriguing features that make her worth knowing about. Here's a hint: Amazon.

No, not the e-commerce site, though your calico probably *loves* playing in the empty boxes lying around your apartment. Think more like *Amazons*, as in the tribe of ancient female warriors. What's that got to do with calico cats? Keep reading.

## THE LATEST

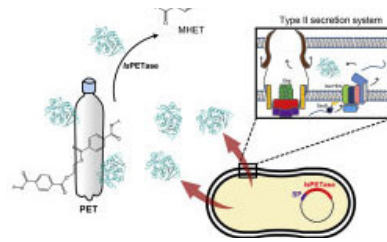


First, "calico" refers to the tricolor cat's fur. It's *not* a breed. Calico cats are almost always white with black and orange splotches, although they can sometimes sport other colors like brown or gray. Second, most interestingly (and here's where the Amazons come in), calicos are almost always female. It all comes down to basic genetics.

## Calico Cats and Genetics

Let's do a quick biology review. Eggs have one X chromosome and are contributed by the female. Sperm is contributed by the male and contains either an X or a Y chromosome. When sperm joins with the egg, the combination of XX or XY creates the gender of the cat. The sex chromosomes are referred to as the XX (female) or XY chromosomes (male). Some attributes, like coat color, are passed down in the cat's sex chromosomes, says Dr. Bruce Kornreich, associate director of the [Cornell Feline Health Center](#) at Cornell University in New York.

"Normal females are XX and normal males are XY," Kornreich says. "Because females have XX, they can receive coat input from the queens (females) and the toms (males). In other words, if one of the X chromosomes (in a female cat) carries a black gene and the other one is an orange gene, in that case you'll have this (calico) mix. But because males only get one X chromosome, it's not common for them to have this mix. They only get the coat color from the queen alone, from one parent."



Are Plastic-eating Enzymes Our Planet's Only Hope?



The Deeply Flawed Genius of Victorian Scientist Francis Galton



How Atlanta Became the World's Busiest Airport, Again

Think of it this way: In order for calico to occur, one of a cat's X chromosomes has to carry a black gene and the other might carry an orange gene. If both the female chromosomes are black, then she'll be black. If they're both orange, she'll be orange. If the chromosomes are mixed, black and orange, she'll be calico.

The patches in calicos occur during the early stages of development in a complicated process called "X chromosome inactivation," which happens when genes for black fur and genes for orange fur are randomly distributed all over the fertilized egg. A black patch of fur is created when the X chromosome carrying the gene for orange fur is inactivated. Conversely, an orange patch of fur is created when the X chromosome carrying the gene for black fur is inactivated. Because of this unusual genetic component, no two calico cats are alike. The markings will never be exactly the same, even in twins.

## Male Calico Cats Are Rare

Something else highly unlikely in calico cats? Males. The chances are only one in 3,000, Kornreich says. So, what accounts for that random one out of 3,000? Occasionally a male cat will inherit an additional sex chromosome and becomes XXY.

"There's actually something similar in humans called Klinefelter syndrome," Kornreich says. "But in the case of the cat, it will have an extra chromosome and if both the Xs aren't the same coat color, they can become calico. It's very rare, as the one in 3,000 number suggests, but it does occur."

If being rare wasn't enough of a life hurdle, male calicos are also sterile. And even though they can't reproduce, experts still recommend they be neutered to deal with territorial spraying or other behavioral issues.

## Are Calicos Cool Pets?

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## RECOMMENDED

**Why do most zippers say "YKK" on the pull-tab?**

**4 Signs You're Infected with a Parasite**

**10 Oldest Known Diseases**

**Where do bullets go when guns are fired straight up into the air?**

**9 'Unsolved' Mysteries That Have Been Solved**

**Where Do Bullets Go When Guns Are Fired Straight Up Into the Air?**

by Taboola

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As for whether calicos make good house pets, cats in general have a reputation for being aloof or standoffish. Kornreich says there is good science to back up the notion that behavior can be genetically imparted, but that has to do with breeding and calico is all about coloring. Is there any connection between the color of a cat's coat and its behavior? A 2015 study by researchers at the University of California-Davis explored that very idea.

Dr. Liz Stelow, a behavioral expert at UC-Davis Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, and her colleagues, professors Melissa Bain and Phillip Kass, used an internet-based survey to collect data from more than 1,200 "cat guardians." The survey asked these pet owners to rate the frequency of behaviors such as hissing and biting using a five-point scale.

"Guardians reported sex-linked orange female (tortoiseshells, calicos and "torbies") black-and-white, and gray-and-white cats to be more frequently aggressive toward humans in three settings: during everyday interactions, during handling, and during veterinary visits," read the report.

Does that mean calicos don't make good pets? Not necessarily, says Kornreich, describing the study as anecdotal. "It's based on an owner's perceptions," he says. "The notion of calico cats being more aggressive, picky or finicky has always been folklore."

## Catnip: Feline P...



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# NOW THAT'S INTERESTING

Many people confuse the calico and the tortoiseshell cat because both have colorful coats. But they're easy to tell apart. Just remember that a calico cat always has three colors in its coat, and it must always include white. Tortoiseshell cats have just two shades, usually ginger red and black, though they can also have hints of cream, orange or gold mixed in.

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Citation & Date | Reprint

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SCIENCE · PREVIOUS STORY



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The Ghosts of Gettysburg's Devil's Den >

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NEW Take our quiz & meet the car you'll love.

## Do You Drive With Your Pet Unrestrained? Here Are 3 Reasons to Reconsider That

By Jen Burklow

August 26, 2019

Share



Manufacturer image

With Labor Day weekend fast approaching — when many Americans will make one more road trip, often with a pet onboard, to catch summer’s last gasp — Volvo is sharing the results of a new pet-travel safety study conducted on its behalf by [The Harris Poll](#). Released to coincide with [National Dog Day](#) (today, don’tcha know?), the unique study reveals just how distracting driving with an unrestrained pet can be.

**Related:** [Road-Tripping With Pets? Here’s What You Need to Know](#)

Part online survey (2,000 adults 18 and older, including 1,433 pet owners) and part observational study (15 licensed drivers), “Volvo Reports: Keeping Pets Safe on the Road” shares pet-centric Americans’ concerns about traveling with pets, as well as their *actual* behavior while driving with their dogs. With in-car cameras recording, study participants drove with their dogs unrestrained and restrained over the course of nearly four weeks. Drivers were analyzed for a total of 30 hours, averaging two hours per driver.

Here are the three major findings the study revealed that should make you rethink driving with an unrestrained pet:

## 1. Dogs Double Danger

The number of unsafe driving behaviors more than doubled when a dog was unrestrained: 649 for the group when dogs were unrestrained versus 274 when restrained

## 2. ... And That Goes Double for Distraction

The time drivers spent distracted also more than doubled when the dog was unrestrained: 219 minutes for the group versus 99 minutes.

## 3. It’s Not Worth the Stress

When dogs were unrestrained, stress levels rose for humans and canines alike: Heart rates for unrestrained dogs were seven beats faster per minute, and human heart rates dropped by 28 to 34 beats per minute when dogs were restrained.

While eye-opening and illustrative of just how distracting an unrestrained pet can be, the study statistics and accompanying video (above) can't really demonstrate the potentially devastating consequences of driving with a restrained pet. When not safely strapped in with a [safety harness](#) or [carrier or contained in a tied-down crate](#), pets become dangerous projectiles during hard stops and accidents. Not only can they be harmed, they can also inflict injuries on other passengers. And if pets escape the vehicle, they can be hit by other vehicles or cause accidents as other drivers try to avoid hitting them.

## Expert Advice

Take it from someone who's seen it: veterinarian Elisa Mazzaferro. An emergency and critical care vet with [Cornell University Veterinary Specialists in Connecticut](#), Mazzaferro said in a statement that a pet allowed to roam in a car "poses serious risk for both drivers and their pets, both in terms of causing distractions and increasing the chances of serious injury in the event of an accident. Unfortunately, in my field, we see the potential devastating consequences regularly, many of which can be avoided by simply ensuring our animals are safely secured."

Here are Mazzaferro's travel safety tips, which we strongly echo:

- **Don't drive with your pet in the front seat:** In a collision, a dog or cat can be thrown from the seat even if restrained; additionally, the pet can be injured if the passenger airbag deploys. According to the study, 70 percent of drivers let their dogs do this.
- **Never drive with a pet on your lap:** Not only is it a driving distraction, but the pet can get caught in the steering wheel or tossed through the windshield or side window in a crash.

- **Never drive with your pet unrestrained:** Besides being a distraction or becoming a projectile, an abrupt stop can cause a pet to fall and incur injury. Worse, they can jump out open windows into moving traffic or escape the vehicle during a collision, subjecting them to injury or getting lost. Some 69 percent of study respondents allow this.
- **Don't allow your pet to lean out a car window:** Even if restrained this just isn't a good idea — debris can hit their eyes, potentially causing injury or possible blindness. More than half of pet owners — 58 percent — said they allow this.

## Awareness Is Improving

The Volvo/Harris Poll study *did* offer some encouraging findings. On the whole, Americans seem more aware of how distracting unrestrained pets can be in a car. According to the study, 77 percent of respondents said, “people don't take vehicular dog safety seriously enough,” with almost one-third of dog owners saying they left their dog at home because of safety concerns — that's an 8 percent increase from a similar 2018 online study.

And many of the respondents want automakers to prioritize pet safety: Nearly two-thirds said manufacturers should offer more dog safety features in their vehicles, and almost half said pet safety features will influence their next vehicle purchase.

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